

For Immediate Release

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Ditchley: NN Land Conservancy Leads to Creative Venture

The Northern Neck Land Conservancy's efforts have enabled an enterprising Northumberland County couple to preserve a historic estate, raise livestock and create an orchard for cider production.

"The owners (Cathy Calhoun and Paul Grosklags) made some terrific decisions to preserve this beautiful property," said NNLC President Lawrence Latane, speaking about the conservation easement and related grants for Ditchley, a 161-acre waterfront estate that dates back to the Lee family and served as the former home of Jessie Ball Dupont.

The Northumberland Country property was slated for subdivision development by the previous owners, Latane said, adding that the Northern Neck Land Conservancy worked with the owners to secure federal and state funds, allowing the land to be preserved, restored and put into use for farming and agriculture production. The result was a \$1.9 million grant through the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which seeks to maintain working farmlands. Additionally, the Virginia Outdoor Foundation provided a \$200,000 grant.

As a result, Calhoun and Grosklags have planted 2,000 cider apple trees, bred and borne Belted Galloway cows, goats, pigs and turkeys, to name just a few. The cows fertilize, the ducks eliminate beetles, the pigs eat apple pulp. "Everything is a systems approach. There is zero waste," Calhoun explained.

The owners plan to open their cidery Oct. 13. Calhoun said she and her husband also plan to rent the renovated mansion for events, such as weddings and attract bicyclists and kayakers. Calhoun and Grosklags have been doing the work themselves, scraping off paint, repairing windows and replacing flooring on the home, originally built in 1762 and renovated in the 1930s for Jesse Ball Dupont, a much-beloved educator and philanthropist in the Northern Neck.

"This is a great example of how the NNLC is using conservation easements to promote farming, which is the Northern Neck's biggest industry," Latane said. Calhoun explained that the USDA grant she received "could be viable in the Northern Neck for other farmers."

NNLC Executive Director Elizabeth Friel worked for a more than a year to secure the federal grant, which is the biggest inland preservation project in Virginia, Latane said, adding: "The federal government could have spent this money anywhere in the United States, but thanks to Elizabeth they invested here where it directly benefits our local economy."

The NNLC's mission is to preserve the rural heritage of the Northern Neck by conserving its lands, water, economies and culture for future generations. A non-profit membership organization, with a 14-member Board of Directors, the NNLC also strives to educate landowners and citizens about the benefits of conservation.

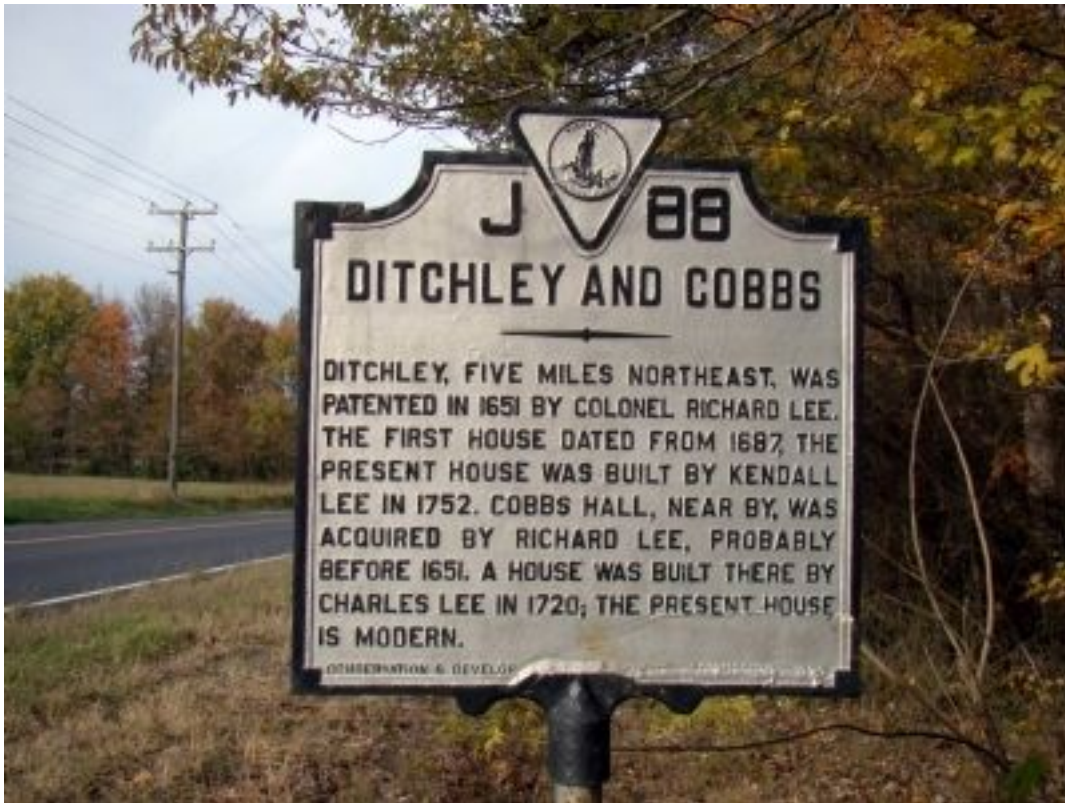
A land conservation easement enables landowners to maintain their land, pass it on to heirs, and protect it from development. Frequently there is a tax saving to the owners. For rural owners and farmers it means that the land can stay in the family for generations, key to family farming enterprises.

For Additional information contact:

**Elizabeth Friel, Executive Director
804-462-0979**

www.nnconserve.org

Photos attached



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DITCHLEY AND COBBS

DITCHLEY, FIVE MILES NORTHEAST, WAS PATENTED IN 1651 BY COLONEL RICHARD LEE. THE FIRST HOUSE DATED FROM 1687, THE PRESENT HOUSE WAS BUILT BY KENDALL LEE IN 1752. COBBS HALL, NEAR BY, WAS ACQUIRED BY RICHARD LEE, PROBABLY BEFORE 1651. A HOUSE WAS BUILT THERE BY CHARLES LEE IN 1720; THE PRESENT HOUSE IS MODERN.

CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT



Cathy Calhoun and Paul Grosklags